

# THE POLYNESIAN.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY, AT HONOLULU, OAHU, SANDWICH ISLANDS.

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1841.

Vol. 1.—No. 38.

## SELECTED.

From the New York Observer.

### ISLANDS WITH OR WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.

Upolu, one of the Navigator Islands, }  
November 8, 1839. }

DEAR SIR—Though it is very uncertain when an opportunity of sending this letter to you will offer, still I shall write you, because these Pacific islands are in some points of view, among the most interesting places we are to visit; more especially to the Christian and the friend of missions: as one of the most important experiments is being made among them, which the attention of man can be directed. We have already visited many of the small coral islands which form the "Dangerous Archipelago," and which are inhabited by a race of cruel and blood-thirsty cannibals, either entirely Godless, or worshippers of spirits and idols; some entirely naked, other clothed with a girde of leaves; and all alike destitute either of intelligence or virtue. But although missionaries have ever been sent among them, and the world in general is indeed almost ignorant that any such islands do exist, still among the more westernly of the group, we found something like a dawning of better things; natives from Tahiti had come among them, bringing with them tidings of another faith; and on one of the isles, Raraka, I found a colony of thirty persons, all Tahitians and Christians, who of their own accord had left their native island, certainly one of the most lovely spots on earth, to reside on a bare and lonely coral reef, scarce elevated above the surface of the sea; native teachers were with them, and from this isle as from a central point, will doubtless issue streams of knowledge to enlighten the dark spots around it. As to Tahiti itself, I took great pains to make myself acquainted with its condition, and from the length of my stay and my extensive acquaintance with both missionaries and natives, believe that I have formed a correct opinion of it. The amount of good that has been effected there by missionary labor is INCALCULABLE; a people who twenty years ago were immersed in the darkness of paganism, worshipping with obscene and cruel rites, demons and idols, and sacrificing on their bloody altars the bodies of their murdered fellow-beings, now assemble on the Sabbath in houses which their own hands have built, to listen to the preached gospel in their own language, and to offer, with a solemnity which I never saw before, their prayers and praises to the Lord that made the heavens; they who a few years since had no alphabet or written language, are able, almost without a single exception, to read the Testament, hymn-books and miscellaneous works, which are now found in every habitation. In every village you will find a large, commodious and handsome church, and at no great distance its accompanying school-house; a regular code of printed laws has taken the place of the arbitrary and absolute will of the chiefs, and not a single vestige now remains of what Pomare, the former king, expressively termed "Tahiti's foolish gods." To say that the morals of the people are good, would be too much; licentiousness is almost universal; but this almost the only crime found among them, and it would be folly to expect in

so short a time, a total eradication of habits firmly fixed by centuries of constant and open vice; even this is diminishing, and the laws against prostitution are rigidly enforced. As to myself, I could not have believed that such a change could have taken place in so short a time. The natives are all decently clad, and their houses are furnished with every necessary article and with many of the conveniences of European civilization. At Tahiti, I saw the process completed; but at the group from which this letter is written, I see it actually going on. Missionaries of the London Society, Dissenters, have been here now about three years only, and yet a great proportion of the islands are Christianized; that is, have thrown aside their former system of folly, and attend regularly the Christian ordinances. Last Sunday I saw the sacrament administered to 29 persons, 22 of them natives; this is at Upolu; at Tutuillah, another island about 40 miles distant, I attended church with about 400 natives at the village of Pango-Pango, and a more attentive and apparently devout assemblage, I certainly never saw. In the village of Apia, where I am now writing, not a canoe will leave the shore upon the Sabbath, nor can anything prevail on the natives to buy or sell upon that day; and yet, only eight miles from this spot, 160 captives, taken in one of their wars, were burnt to death upon a single pile! and that not quite nine years ago! About two-thirds of the inhabitants of this island are nominally Christians: the remaining third are heathen. I have spent much time among them both; have visited a gain and again both the heathen and Christian villages, and can tell you just the difference between them. About two miles from this place, there is a heathen village, and a short distance farther on, another. In the Christian villages LICENTIOUSNESS IS UNKNOWN; schools are established and well attended; the gospel is regularly preached in the native language; the Testament, or a portion of it, has been translated and issued; property is secure, and violence and murder are nearly unknown; the people are at least partly clothed, for cloth is scarce and very valuable among them; the hair is cut off, and the face and body are not disfigured by paint and red and black earth. On the contrary, in the heathen villages, any thing like female virtue or modesty is wanting. I have seen a dozen young girls and women dancing perfectly naked; there are no schools or means of instruction; no worship; uproar and violence are common; a great portion of the people are more than half-naked, and all the children are perfectly so; they suffer their hair to grow to an immense length, and some of them paint their faces and bodies with red ochre, after a most hideous fashion; they are in fact savages. And yet all this vast difference has been occasioned by the labor of missionaries for three years. At least principally; for a few Tahitians, professors of Christianity, had visited the Navigator group before the missionaries came; now no part of the credit of this great change can be given to the visits of any other foreigners than these missionaries; for while the islands were savage, they were very seldom visited, and then usually only by debauched and worthless sailors. The Prince of the

islands, an old chief named Mariotah, made a treaty with the Commodore in behalf of the United States a day or two ago, after two councils, which I attended, and is to call in a few days a parliament of the chiefs to make a code of laws for the government of the island. The change has been indeed vast; and when I consider that it has been owing exclusively to the unassisted labors of half a dozen unprotected ministers, I am constrained to believe that it is not altogether their doing. I recollect many times hearing you speak of the Moravian missionaries among the Esquimaux; ascribing the failure of their earlier efforts to their attempts to civilize before Christianizing their people; and I doubted the correctness of your observation. But I believe you were right, and am certain that the best way to civilize a people is to Christianize them. The religion of the heathen parts of the island is singular: they have no idols, no temples, and no worship. They have an indefinite notion of an evil being who dwells in the woods; and each person chooses for himself a god, or as they call it, spirit, as a dog, a snake, a shark, or whatever else they select, and pretend to honor it; but the only mark of respect I ever saw them pay their god, is before they eat or drink, they always throw over their shoulder a small quantity of their food or water for him. The manners of the people are peculiar; and I have found much to interest me among them; but I have already written too long a letter, and must bring it to a close.

## COMMUNICATED.

The following letters relating to Kamohameha I, were handed us by a gentleman, who was allowed to take a copy of the originals, (which we believe are in the possession of a gentleman of this town) some time since. We have retained the old spelling of the names of the chiefs.

His Britannic Majesty's Ship }  
Discovery, Karakakooa Bay, }  
Owyhee, March 1, 1793. }

I beg leave to inform all Commanders of vessels, &c. into whose hands this testimony may fall, that on February the 21st 1793, I was visited at sea by Tamaah maah, the sole acknowledged King of Owyhee, and in company with His Britannic Majesty's Armed Tender the Chatlam, on the following day, entered Karakakooa Bay, where we remained until the date hereof; having our Tents, Observatory, &c., on shore, where they were protected and guarded equally by the people of Tamaah maah as by ourselves; and who, with the people under his authority, supplied us with water, wood, and all kinds of refreshments, &c., in the greatest profusion, for which they received neither arms or ammunition, but cheerfully and eagerly disposed of their commodities for other articles of commerce, infinitely more useful and necessary to their comforts.

And I have great pleasure in informing those whom it may concern, that Tamaah maah, with the generality of the Chiefs, and the whole of the lower order of the people, have conducted themselves towards us with the strictest honesty, civility, and friendly attention: it may however be necessary to notice those who were most distinguishable in points of

friendship, hospitality, &c.—These were, first, and without exception, Tamaah maah; next, Kahou Motoo; thirdly, Tirre mitii, (Tamaah maah's own brother), and Canahero, the Chief of the village of Kowroua: these in every instance, seemed to study our interest, comforts, &c., and render us every service in their power. Tianna, with Commannaou, and some other Chiefs, also visited us; but I fear Tianna with his brother, Nomitchah, and probably Commannaou, are persons not much to be trusted.

It has been reported, much to the prejudice of Tamaah maah's benevolent, humane, and friendly character, that he was principally accessory in the taking of the Schooner called the Fair American, Mr. Medcalf, the younger, Commander. Such report, I find, from the undoubted authority of Isaac Davis, who was captured in her, and now residing with Tamaah maah, to be totally groundless, and that he had not the smallest knowledge or acquaintance of the matter until it was finally accomplished: that horrid deed being executed by a Chief named Tamaah Motoo; the principal part being the murder of the commander, was executed by himself, and the rest by his people, without any other Chief being concerned. This Tamaah Motoo should be strictly guarded against, he having always joined Tianna in all his plans and proposed projects for capturing small vessels; which plans, by Tamaah maah, Kahou Motoo, Tirre Mitii, and Canahero, have been uniformly opposed; and by such means some vessels which, without the knowledge of those on board, were in the most imminent danger of destruction, by their means were preserved, and departed in peace.

I have given this sketch of the characters of the different leading chiefs of this Island, so far as I have been able to learn with certainty; and what I consider as worthy of being depended upon; recommending to the notice and friendship of those who may wish to benefit by such information, the four above mentioned chiefs, and in particular Tamaah maah, whose services and good offices they will find very pleasant, and highly essential to their interest, comfort, and accommodation.

Residing with Tamaah maah are three seamen, named John Young, Isaac Davis, and John Smith; these, I have every reason to believe are subjects of Great Britain, particularly the two former, at least as such they have acknowledged themselves under my authority; and for divers and good essential reasons I have given them my permission still to remain on this Island: I therefore, in the name of the King my Master, recommend them to be treated with civility, kindness, and hospitality, not only by the subjects of Great Britain, but also those of other powers or states who may meet with them; and have, in consequence of such recommendation strictly enjoined them to render every service in their power to the different European powers or states, as likewise those of America, &c., that may visit this Island during their residence on it.

Should this representation prove serviceable to those who may meet with it, it will be highly satisfactory to their most obedient servant.

(Signed) GEO. VANCOUVER.

Having visited the Island of Owyhee,